U.S. AbilityOne Commission
Minutes – Quarterly Public Meeting

Wednesday, July 22, 2026
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. ET

I. Call to Order

U.S. AbilityOne Commission Chairperson Chris Brandt called the meeting to order at 2 p.m. and greeted the approximately 170 participants attending via Zoom.

II. Administrative Remarks and Introductions

Commission Executive Officer Angela Phifer gave administrative remarks. She noted that two American Sign Language interpreters would interpret and that the meeting was being live captioned.

Commission members introduced themselves.

Executive Director Kim Zeich and Acting Inspector General Carla Smith introduced themselves and certain staff members.

III. Consideration of Minutes

Minutes from the April 22, 2026 public meeting were approved. (They were later posted on the Commission Meetings webpage with the agenda, slides, and video.)

IV. Chairperson Remarks

In conjunction with America's 250th Anniversary, Brandt briefly discussed the AbilityOne Program's work to preserve and protect the country's history and heritage by providing services for some of America's most iconic national landmarks, including the Statue of Liberty, Library of Congress, Pearl Harbour National Memorial, several Presidential libraries, the National Mall, military installations with historic legacies, and more.

She mentioned several summer anniversaries that are important to the Program, including the Wagner-O'Day Act (June 1938), Americans with Disabilities Act (July 1990), and final rule ending the use of subminimum wages in AbilityOne (July 2022).

Brandt mentioned the Commission's participation in SourceAmerica's Xforce National Conference in May 2026.

She observed that July 22 was the deadline to provide comments on the Commission's draft strategic plan for FY 2026-2030, and she thanked all who had already submitted comments.

V. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Zeich gave a report, which covered, among other topics, the onboarding of the Commission's new Chief Information Officer.

VI. Office of Inspector General Presentation

Acting Inspector General Carla Smith gave an update.

VII. Public Engagement Session

The Commission had announced that the public engagement session would both celebrate the historic milestone of America250 and continue to emphasize "Innovation in AbilityOne Products and Domestic Manufacturing." In keeping with these themes, speakers were invited to highlight examples of pride and patriotism within – and contributions of – the AbilityOne Program's 88-year history of Federal contracting. In addition, speakers were invited to highlight current domestic manufacturing within the AbilityOne Program including, but not limited to, examples of innovation, efficiency, speed, cost effectiveness, competitiveness, responsiveness to customer needs, reshoring/onshoring materials or components (to use domestic sources), and supply chain management.

Deputy Executive Director Amy Jensen moderated the session. She observed that the session built on the public engagement session at the April 22, 2026, quarterly public meeting, which also focused on innovation in AbilityOne products and domestic manufacturing.

Brett Linton, Senior Vice President of Manufacturing, Peckham Industries, Brewster, NY

Linton said that Peckham has recently focused on incorporating updated technology that can help it be more efficient in the diverse range of products it manufactures.

He showed a video about Peckham that discussed, among other topics, how Peckham employees are trained across multiple manufacturing disciplines and given opportunities to gain technical proficiency. The video also described Peckham's use of technology such as precision cutting and systems that track and scan every raw material, component and work-in-progress assembly.

Steve Coons, President, Fedcap Rehabilitation Services, Inc., New York, NY

Coons gave a brief presentation on the history and scope of Fedcap's work, including its role since 1998 providing all janitorial services at the Statue of Liberty National Monument, which includes Ellis Island. Fedcap's 24/7 work at the Statue of Liberty National Monument includes supporting special events, dignitary events, and emergency services. Coons said Fedcap was involved in the triaging of evacuees from the World Trade Center after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and with the rebuild at the Statue of Liberty National Monument following the damage of Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Fedcap employee Fernando Santiago spoke about rising through the ranks from custodian to his current role: building manager at the Statue of Liberty. He said he loves interacting with visitors, the National Park Service, and other Fedcap workers, and he hasn't called out from work in 20 years.

Doug Stairs, Vice President of Operations, North Bay Industries, Rohnert Park, CA

Stairs gave a brief presentation on North Bay Industries (NBI), which has contracts for both products and services but is best known for manufacturing American flags for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). NBI has manufactured approximately 2.5 million flags for the VA.

A NBI employee named Nick described his work cutting stars for the American flags.

NBI has invested in new equipment and procedures in partnership with the SourceAmerica Technology and Automation Enhancement Program (TAEP).

Lauren Branch, President and CEO, NewView Oklahoma, Oklahoma City

Branch gave a brief presentation on NewView Oklahoma, which is the largest employer of people who are blind in Oklahoma.

NewView manufactures all firehoses for the U.S. Forest Service. Additionally, NewView manufactures a line of hoses for Navy ships and submarines; these require 100% quality testing.

NewView also manufactures aircraft wheel chocks (heavy blocks for holding aircraft wheels in position) for the U.S. Air Force. Several years ago NewView revamped the entire line to include adaptive equipment that enables people who are blind to work on the product from start to finish, beginning with the raw lumber.

NewView employee Gerald Robertson discussed his career. Before he lost his vision as an adult, he had worked in manufacturing at a tire company and automotive parts company. After losing his vision, he was hired at NewView, where he started out in the hose department and, 13 years later, is a production supervisor. NewView's adaptive equipment makes it possible for any employee, no matter what their vision level, to work on the hoses, he said.

In response to a question from Commission member Jeff Mittman, Branch discussed NewView's experience with domestic sourcing.

In response to a question from Zeich, Branch discussed the challenge of maintaining capability, supply chains, and jobs when customer demand can go up and down significantly, for instance because of active or less active fire seasons.

Kasia Grzelkowski, President and CEO, VersAbility Resources, Hampton, VA

Grzelkowski gave a brief presentation on VersAbility, which is the prime contractor for loading food on U.S. Navy ships, from submarines to aircraft carriers. This is mission-essential logistics support that is vital to national security.

When VersAbility was awarded this contract, it made a decision to subcontract some of the work to other AbilityOne nonprofits so as to build the capacity of the field and help with job creation around the country.

Zane Sanford, a member of VersAbility's Norfolk ship provisioning team, discussed his work. When the most recent military conflict in and around Iran broke out, he and his team sometimes worked 10-15 hour days, including on the weekend.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

Brandt thanked all the speakers as well as the people who had submitted comments. She said the conversation had covered important and thought-provoking topics. She adjourned the meeting.

Meeting Attendees

Approximately 170 people attended, including:

Commission Members

Chris Brandt, Chairperson	Private Citizen
Virna Winters, Vice Chairperson	Department of Commerce
Matthew Beebe	Department of Defense
Tara Jamison	Department of Justice
Jeffrey Koses	General Services Administration
Jeffrey Mittman	Private Citizen
Jennifer Sheehy	Department of Labor

Scheduled Speakers

Lauren Branch	President and CEO, NewView Oklahoma
Steve Coons	President, Fedcap Rehabilitation Services, Inc.
Kasia Grzelkowski	President and CEO, VersAbility Resources
Brett Linton	Senior VP of Manufacturing, Peckham Industries
Doug Stairs	Vice President of Operations, North Bay Industries